

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 73

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE STATE ENGINEER TO CONDUCT A ONE-YEAR STUDY OF THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE HYDROLOGIC DESIGN OF FLOOD CONTROL FACILITIES.

WHEREAS, New Mexico state agencies, including the office of the state engineer, have conducted reviews of the reality and possible effects of global warming and of associated climate change, and these agencies have concluded that both are occurring and will have negative impacts on our state; and

WHEREAS, a conference of the world's experts in the field concluded in a February 2007 report that climate change is happening, that the actions of humans are, in part, responsible and that many of the associated adverse impacts cannot be reversed; and

WHEREAS, in the past, criteria for the hydrologic design

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1 of storm structures have been based on the historic record of
2 hydrologic events; and

3 WHEREAS, climate change may render inadequate our reliance
4 on the historic record of these hydrologic events as criteria
5 in the hydrologic design of reconstructed and future flood
6 control facilities; and

7 WHEREAS, one of the associated effects of climate change
8 that has already been observed is an increase in the number and
9 magnitude of precipitation events of long duration and great
10 intensity; and

11 WHEREAS, these precipitation events have led to flooding
12 that has threatened flood control structures, including dams
13 and levees, and caused injury and damage to people, animals,
14 farms, homes and businesses in New Mexico; and

15 WHEREAS, there is no single state agency responsible for
16 the collection, analysis and real-time dissemination of
17 information on major precipitation events; and

18 WHEREAS, the real-time tracking of major storm events and
19 the dissemination of warnings to local communities is
20 technologically possible; and

21 WHEREAS, while some states enjoy the availability of real-
22 time precipitation data, collected by a large network of
23 volunteers located along major storm tracks, New Mexico does
24 not; and

25 WHEREAS, there is no licensing procedure and no experience

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1 requirement, nor is there any test required, for those who
2 profess to be experts in the design of hydrologic facilities;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, the office of the state engineer is responsible
5 for the safe design and operation of dams, but New Mexico does
6 not have a state agency that is responsible for developing
7 hydrologic criteria and methodologies for the safe design and
8 operation of other storm facilities; and

9 WHEREAS, New Mexico does not have a state hydrologist, nor
10 does it have a committee of engineers and geologists to advise
11 the office of the state engineer on hydrologic design criteria
12 and methodologies, and the office of the state engineer would
13 be a logical location for these entities;

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
15 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the office of the state engineer be
16 requested to conduct a study of this matter and report its
17 findings and recommendations to the next session of the
18 legislature; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
20 transmitted to the office of the state engineer.